



A Jataka Tale on a Sasanian Silver Plate

G U I T T Y A Z A R P A Y

*The fragrance of the timiras is blown;
the evil sea is full of sound.
Sussondi is far from here.
Tamba, loves torment me.
—Jataka 360*

A great eagle's seizure of a woman is the extraordinary theme depicted on a Sasanian silver-gilt plate, from Russia's Perm region, in the collection of the Hermitage Museum (acc. no. S217), at St. Petersburg (fig. 1). Although rare in Sasanian art, variations on this theme find artistic expression in a number of traditions in the Old and New Worlds from early historic times to the present.

The most familiar versions are perhaps Graeco-Roman portrayals of Ganymede's abduction by the eagle of Zeus (fig. 2) that find even earlier models in representations of the Akkadian myth of Etana, on ancient Near Eastern seals of the third millennium B.C. If the eagle's abduction of Ganymede is seen as a Western revision of the Akkadian motif, an Eastern redaction is surely the Iron Age image of an eagle-borne goddess on the gold bowl from Hasanlu, in northwestern Iran. In Near Eastern folklore and literature, the motif recurs in such fabulous bird rescues as the deliverance of Zal, the abandoned infant, by Simurgh, the mythical bird immortalized in the Persian national epic, the *Shāhnāma*, and the shipwrecked Sinbad's rescue by the giant bird, Rukh, related in a tale from the *Thousand and One Nights*.¹

The aim of this paper is twofold: one, to trace the form of the eagle abduction motif in Sasanian art and two, to explore its meaning with reference to its immediate Graeco-Buddhist prototypes in Gandharan art. The identification of some Gandharan versions of the motif with the text of a particular Buddhist folktale, a jataka of

universal appeal, proposed here, is suggested as a reason for the spread and adaptation of the motif in Iran and in the Eastern Christian world in early Medieval times.

1. The Eagle Abduction Scene on the Hermitage Plate: Form and Meaning

Formal Analysis

The most remarkable feature of the Hermitage plate is its subject matter, which shows a nude female figure, with frontal body represented on a vertical axis and head and limbs in a profile toward the right, held in the claws of a bird of prey spread-eagled axially. The bird, twice the size of the woman, is shown frontally, with its profile head facing left and its tail feathers raised above the groundline. In her right hand the woman raises the small stem of a heaped platter toward the bird's beak, and in her left she seems to grip the bird's left wing. The bird's tail feathers, raised above the groundline as if in upward flight, are approached from either side by a pair of nude, adolescent male figures armed with a bow and an axe, respectively. The youths, who are shown as about half the woman's size, with frontal torsos and heads and limbs in profile, kneel on the rope border that defines the groundline. The groundline and lateral limits of the composition are emphasized by two flowering trees with trunks that emerge directly from



Fig. 1. Sasanian silver-gilt plate found at Cherdyn, the Perm region. Diam. 22 cm, W. 828.6 g. Dated to the late 6th or early 7th century A.D. The Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg, acc. no. S217. After *Splendeur de Sassanides*, no. 74.

the curved lower border of the composition. The principal scene is encircled by a vegetal scroll border from which grow pomegranates, grapevines, and ornamental flowers, and along which are scattered, clockwise, small images of two dogs and three birds.

The style, place of origin, and date of the Hermitage plate were carefully considered in the 1987 study of K. V. Trever and V. G. Lukonin.² Stylistic, iconographic, and technological considerations led the latter to date the Hermitage plate to the first half of the seventh century. Moreover, these authors associate this and two other decorated silver plates with vegetal scroll borders, also in the Hermitage Museum (acc. nos. S41 and S18), with a class of decorated silver produced in Eastern Iran. Stylistic and technological considerations lead Boris Marshak and Prudence Harper, in a more recent study, also to distinguish these plates (acc. nos. S41, S18, and S217) from those produced in central

Sasanian workshops. Indeed, Harper here identifies the vegetal borders of the type that encircle the main designs on the plate under study as a non-Sasanian feature. Nevertheless, even if these plates are attributed to an East Iranian workshop, their stylistic particulars are generally inspired by the artistic tradition of Sasanian Persia. Indeed, the decoration and anatomical proportions of both the female figure and the eagle on the Hermitage plate find their closest antecedents in Sasanian art, as evidenced in the fourth-century stucco images from the Sasanian manor house at Hājiābād, in Fars (figs. 3, 4).³

Meaning

At the time of its discovery in 1936, the composition on the Hermitage plate was the subject of a thorough comparative study by K. V. Trever, who was the first to analyze its style



Fig. 2. (Left) Ganymede and the Eagle, Roman copy in marble of a Greek sculptural group. The Vatican Museum, Rome. After Bieber, *The Sculpture of the Hellenistic Age*, fig. 198.

Fig. 4. (Below right) Stucco statuette of a nude woman from the Sasanian site of Hājīābād, Iran, 4th century A.D. H. 61 cm. Iran Melli Museum, Teheran. After Azarnoush, *The Manor House at Hājīābād*, fig. 120.



Fig. 3. (Above) Stucco figure of an eagle with spread wings, from the Sasanian site of Hājīābād, Iran, 4th century A.D. H. 28 cm. Iran Melli Museum, Teheran. After Azarnoush, *The Manor House at Hājīābād*, fig. 130.





Fig. 5. Seizure of a woman by an eagle, depicted on a gold pitcher (no. 2) from the Nagyszentmiklós treasure, Hungary, 9th to 10th century A.D. The Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna. After László, *The Art of the Migration Period*, fig. 150.

and iconography and to propose an interpretation of its meaning. Trever compares the eagle abduction motif with similar motifs in works of art of wide temporal and geographic distribution. These include later adaptations of the motif, exemplified by the eagle abduction of a woman on a ninth- to tenth-century gold pitcher from the Nagyszentmiklós treasure, from Hungary (fig. 5), and other versions such as that on the Quedlinburg shroud, in Berlin, dated to the eleventh-twelfth century. As forerunners of the motif, Trever cites ancient Near Eastern depictions of the Akkadian Etana myth, the Graeco-Roman Ganymede motif, and the Gandharan motif of Garuda's abduction of a nagi, the female personification of the serpent. Finally, Trever interprets the principal scene on the Hermitage plate as a Sasanian Persian version that

makes reference to the Zoroastrian feast of Mithrakana and to Ameretat, the Avestan deity of plants, and, by extension, the vine. Trever sees in the scene a reference also to the Vedic myth of the theft of the divine liquid, Soma (Ir. *ha-oma*), and its retrieval by Indra-Mithra-Eagle. The two youthful male figures in the composition are identified by Trever with the Asvins, the Vedic divine twins, and with their Avestan counterparts, Haurvatat and Ameretat.⁴

Trever's identification of the nude female figure with the Soma plant is questioned by N. Mavrodinov, in his 1943 study of eagle abduction scenes depicted on two gold pitchers from the Nagyszentmiklós treasure (fig. 5). Mavrodinov notes that since the Soma plant's divine personification is invariably male, the eagle abduction scenes that involve a woman must

refer to the descent from heaven of the Iranian goddess Anahita, as goddess of fruits, flower, harvest, and vintage.⁵

Mavrodinov's interpretation is rejected by András Alföldi in his 1952 study, in which the armed youths in the scene on the Hermitage plate are identified not with the divine twins but with protective guardians who attempt to thwart the abduction. This interpretation is based on comparison with Buddhist paintings from Serindia that show individuals armed with weapons in defense of children abducted by eagle/griffins.⁶ Alföldi sees the Gandharan eagle abduction motif as intermediate between the Graeco-Roman Ganymede motif and later versions, such as that found on the Hermitage plate.⁷

In a 1971 study, the first of two articles on art and religion in the Sasanian period, J. Duchesne-Guillemin interprets the scene on the Hermitage plate by reference to a passage from the Avesta that treats the boatman Paurva, who, in the form of a bird, flies incessantly through the air for three days and nights. Unable to check his flight, Paurva is finally rescued when his prayer is heard by the goddess Anahita, who then guides Paurva's descent to earth.⁸ This interpretation is accepted by Trever and Lukonin in their joint 1987 publication in which they now identify the nude female figure on the Hermitage plate with a personification of Anahita, shown with the eagle/hero, during her descent to earth.⁹ Lukonin explains the two youthful male figures with weapons as a reference to the days and nights of the hero's flight in the context of the Avestan passage. However, in a characteristically insightful way, Lukonin expresses perplexity about the reason for the popularity and illustration of this otherwise obscure Avestan passage in works of art of the Sasanian and post-Sasanian periods.

A subsequent reevaluation of the scene, in a second article on art and religion in the Sasanian period, led Duchesne-Guillemin to revise his earlier views on the scene on the Hermitage plate.¹⁰ Here, Duchesne-Guillemin concurs with Alföldi's rejection of the identification of the woman on the Hermitage plate with Anahita. He sees the woman as a sort of nymph, derived from Hellenistic models. The latter view is prompted by A. D. H. Bivar's study of an eagle abduction motif on a seal from a Punjab col-



Fig. 6. Ganymede and the Eagle, mosaic. Villa at Baccano, near Rome, 3d century A.D. Museo Nazionale, Rome. Photo: After Phillips, "Subject and Technique in Hellenistic-Roman Mosaics," fig. 15.

lection, which Bivar regards as a Hellenistic depiction of the abduction of the nymph Aegina by Zeus in the form of an eagle.¹¹

In a recent study of the eagle abduction scene on the Hermitage plate, Marshak dismisses all conjectures about its meaning, in which he detects an important, but unidentified, myth. Nevertheless, he explains the armed youths as a reference to day and night and ponders a connection between the scene's floral border and the Tree of Many Seeds of ancient Persian mythology.¹² Even this conjecture may be questioned by analogy with late Roman art, where such trees are adopted as mere compositional props in similar compositions. There, the dynamic diagonal flight of the eagle with Ganymede is grounded, creating a static apprehension position, as depicted in a mosaic from a villa at Baccano, outside Rome, dated to the third century A.D. [fig. 6].¹³ Here, where the diagonal flight line is replaced by a vertical one, the shaded, horizontal groundline on which the action takes place is deliberately reinforced by the addition of two flanking trees in precisely the manner



Fig. 7. Garuda's abduction of a woman with two attendants. Fragmentary Gandharan turban emblem in gray schist. H. 17.7 cm. Private collection, Europe. After Kurita, *Gandhāran Art*, vol. 2, no. 190 (image reversed; see n. 27).

adopted in the abduction scene on the Hermitage plate. The flanking trees that serve to ground the action avoid the difficulties inherent in the depiction of motion through the substitution of a diagonal flight line for a vertical one (cf. figs. 2, 7). This process is carried even further in the static, cross-shaped composition of the abduction scene on the Hermitage plate (fig. 1).

Although cognizant of the need for a broadened comparative framework, the foregoing stud-

ies are inconclusive in their identification of the meaning of the eagle abduction motif on the Hermitage plate. The connection between the latter and a specific mythological narrative in Sasanian art is complicated by the paucity of illustrations of mythological scenes in that art. In contrast to Indian art of the same period, which depicts mythological subjects in richly detailed and extended narrative formats, reference to myths generally occurs in allegorical or symbolic form in Sasanian art.



Fig. 8. Garuda's abduction of a haloed male, Kizil, Cave 165, dated to the early 7th century A.D. *In situ*, Xinjiang Province, China. After *The grotto art of China*, vol. 2, pl. 177.

2. The Abduction of a Woman by an Eagle: Gandhara and Central Asia

Formal Analysis

Garuda's seizure of a woman occurs in numerous examples of Buddhist art from the Indian subcontinent and Central Asia. The majority is represented by Gandharan sculptural groups in gray schist or slate, measuring from 20 to over 50 cm in height, from sites in northwestern Pakistan and southern Afghanistan, and generally datable to the third through the mid-fifth century A.D. The motif is more rarely found on sealstones and reportedly occurs also in an unpublished mural from a Buddhist establishment at Zar-tepe, near Termez, in Kushan Bactria, present-day Uzbekistan, dated also to the late fourth to the fifth century A.D. A comparable motif, first cited by Albert von Le Coq, is found in a Buddhist cave painting from Kucha, which remains *in situ* in Cave 165 at Kizil, in China's Xinjiang province, dated to the early seventh century. This scene, however, differs from the Gandharan motif in the imagery of Garuda, shown as a double-headed eagle without anthro-

pomorphic features, and in the male gender of the eagle's haloed victim (fig. 8).¹⁴ The motif also occurs in the later Buddhist art, notably in that of Nepal, Tibet, and Mongolia, where it survives into the eighteenth century.

Gandharan sculptural groups that depict Garuda's seizure of a woman are here subdivided into four versions distinguished by the degree of the complexity of compositional elements. The simplest version of the motif is found in miniature compositions (ca. 7–10 cm high) used as turban emblems of Gandharan Bodhisattva images, and occasionally in intaglio on sealstones and on sealings. This version is embellished by the introduction of specific narrative details that recur in the more complex versions of the motif in Gandhara sculptural groups.

The *first version*, the simplest form of the motif, shows a woman held by the waist or hips in the talons of Garuda, whose head is often somewhat anthropomorphized. This form of the motif was first noted in examples represented by sculptural groups from Buddhist monasteries at Sanghao and Nathou, in the Swat region, in present-day Pakistan. In the best-preserved example, from Sanghao, an elaborately dressed and bejewelled woman rests languorously on her left



Fig. 9. Left: Garuda's abduction of a woman, Gandharan gray schist sculptural group from the Buddhist monastery at Sanghao, the Swat region, Pakistan. The Delhi Museum. Right: same subject and material, from the nearby Nathou monastery. After Kurita, *Gandhāran Art*, vol. 2, fig. 514.

Fig. 10. Drawing of Garuda's abduction of a woman, Gandharan gray schist sculptural group from the Buddhist monastery at Sanghao [above, fig. 9]. After Grünwedel, *Buddhist Art in India*, fig. 61.

foot as she raises her right hand, which holds the lower end of a snake toward Garuda's beak. Garuda, shown with turban and earrings, grips the snake's neck in his beak and the woman's waist in his talons (fig. 9, left; fig. 10).¹⁵

Other sculptural groups from Sanghao and Nathou constitute more fragmentary or smaller examples, which show the female figure with differing attire and posture (fig. 9, right).¹⁶ In a miniature example of the motif from Sanghao (H. 10.2 cm), in the Lahore Museum (no. 1045), dated by Ingholt to the fourth century, Garuda's beak grips a snake that emerges from behind the woman's head (fig. 11).¹⁷ This example and other

miniature examples of Garuda abduction scenes in gray schist probably functioned as turban emblems used in the headdresses of some Bodhisattva images. Like miniature Buddha images, which also occur as the headdress ornament of Bodhisattva images, the Garuda abduction scene was a symbol that evidently was deemed appropriate as a Bodhisattva's turban emblem.¹⁸ The emblem is found on the turban of some intact Bodhisattva images, as on the standing Bodhisattva from Mekha-Sanda, near Shabaz-Garhi, in the Musée Guimet (acc. no. AO 2907), Paris, dated to the third century or somewhat later (fig. 12).¹⁹ Here, the Garuda abduction scene is



Fig. 11. Garuda's abduction of a woman, Gandharan gray schist fragment, probably a turban emblem from a Bodhisattva image. H. 10.2 cm. From a Buddhist monastery = Sanghao, the Swat region, Pakistan, 4th century A.D. Ingholt, *Gandhāran Art in Pakistan*, fig. 350.

surrounded by the circular folds of the topknot of the turban, which occasionally is further embellished by an ornate headband, placed below the emblem and decorated with symmetrically arranged figures of tritons around a central medallion.²⁰ The presence of tritons at the base of the emblem on the headband also occurs in compositions that depict the submission of nagas to the Buddha.²¹

The first version of the Garuda abduction scene is well documented in larger sculptural groups, such as that in the Australian National Gallery, Canberra (H. 40.6 cm) (fig. 13). Here, Garuda's neck is encircled by the body of a serpent whose hooded head is gripped in the bird's beak. The woman's right hand is raised above her head toward the serpent which she appears to have just released. The woman's crossed legs, languid pose, and upturned head are repeated in another sculptural group in the Victoria and Albert Museum, London (fig. 14). The volup-

tuously proportioned woman, portrayed with ecstatic expression in the latter group, places her right arm on her chest and rests her left hand on Garuda's talons over her left hip. A similar pose and facial expression are displayed by the abducted woman in a sculptural group (H. 53 cm), in the Tokyo National Gallery (fig. 15). In the Victoria and Albert group (fig. 14), as in the group in the Australian National Gallery (fig. 13), the body of the serpent gripped in Garuda's beak is wrapped around the bird's neck, beyond the woman's reach. Garuda's head is not preserved in the sculptural group in the Tokyo National Gallery. This version of Garuda's abduction of a woman is also found in the glyptic arts of the Indian subcontinent, exemplified by a seal, probably of early Gandharan date, from a collection formerly in Punjab, and by an Indian sealing, inscribed with northern Gupta characters of the fifth century A.D., in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston (fig. 16).²² In the



Fig. 12. Standing Bodhisattva, detail of Gandharan gray schist image from Shabaz-Garhi, Pakistan. 3d–4th century A.D. Overall H. 120 cm. Musée Guimet, Paris, acc. no. AO 2907. After Hallade, *Gandharan Art of North India*, pl. 68.



Fig. 13. Garuda abducting a maiden, Gandharan sculptural group, 3d century A.D. H. 40.6 cm. National Gallery of Australia, Canberra. Photo: Courtesy the National Gallery of Australia.



Fig. 14. Garuda and a nag, Gandharan gray schist sculptural group. Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Photo: Courtesy the Trustees of the Victoria and Albert Museum.

latter, a relatively late and ornamental version of the motif, Garuda is crowned rather than turbaned.

A search for formal models of the Garuda abduction scene in Graeco-Buddhist art must surely begin with the Graeco-Roman motif of Ganymede's abduction by the eagle of Zeus, painted on the first-century glass goblet from the Kushan treasure from Begram, Afghanistan,

now in the collection of the Musée Guimet, Paris (fig. 17).²³ Ganymede, with Phrygian cap, boots, cape, and loincloth, is here shown swept up diagonally by the eagle. Although the glass goblet may have been produced in Alexandria, its presence in the Begram treasure proves the introduction of the motif to the Indian subcontinent by the first century A.D., or in pre-Gandharan times.²⁴ However, the replacement



Fig. 15. Garuda and Yakshini, Gandharan sculptural group, from the vicinity of Peshawar, Pakistan. H. 53 cm. Tokyo National Museum. Photo: Courtesy the Tokyo National Museum.

of the diagonal flight of the eagle abduction scene, such as that found on the Begram goblet, by a vertical flight line in Gandharan versions of the motif indicates the latter's dependence on later Roman models (cf. figs. 2, 6), where the vertical flight is used to avoid difficulties inherent in the depiction of motion.

The scene of the eagle's abduction of Ganymede is one of two Hellenistic renditions of



Fig. 16. Garuda's abduction of a woman on Indian clay sealing of the Gupta period, 5th century A.D. Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, acc. no. 36.622. Photo: Courtesy Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.

the legend of Ganymede in works of art from the Begram treasure. A different rendition of the Ganymede myth, found on a plaster medallion in the Kabul Museum, was evidently disregarded as a formal model in the subsequent Buddhist art of Gandhara. This medallion shows a seated, cup-bearing Ganymede tending an eagle of comparable dimensions. With his right hand, Ganymede here feeds the eagle as he rests his left hand on the eagle's wing.²⁵ The erotic character of the scene is suggested by the small figure of a wingless Eros, shown squatting playfully at the base of the composition.

A second version of Garuda's abduction of a woman in Gandharan art is represented by sculptural groups that include one or two additional female figures around the principal abduction scene. The turban emblem of a Bodhisattva, in the Lahore Museum, shows a fragmentary

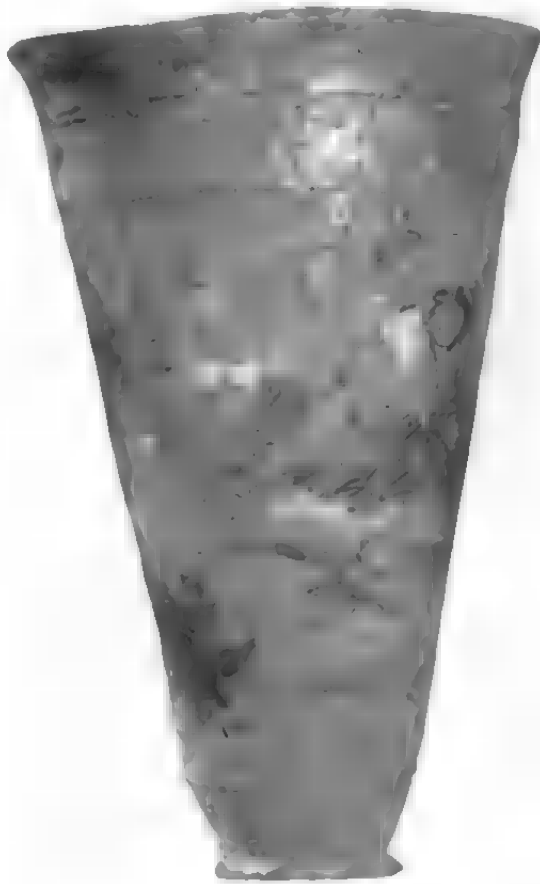


Fig. 17. Ganymede and the Eagle, painted in enamel colors on a glass goblet from the Begram treasure, Afghanistan 1st century A.D. Musée Guimet, Paris. Photo: Courtesy Musée Guimet.



Fig. 18. Garuda abducting two nagakanyas, Gandharan gray schist sculptural group. H. 20.7 cm. Museum of Art and Archaeology, University of Missouri-Columbia, acc. no. 74.127, gift of Dr. Samuel Eilenberg. Photo: Courtesy the Museum of Art and Archaeology, University of Missouri-Columbia.

Garuda abduction scene that includes a female attendant shown turning from the abduction scene.²⁶ Two attendants flank the protagonist in another sculptural group, probably also a turban emblem of a Bodhisattva image, from a private collection in Europe (fig. 7).²⁷ The principal female figure, in hip girdle and jewelry, raises her left arm toward Garuda's head, and places the right ■ her chest, ■ gesture that is also found in examples from the first version of the motif, represented by sculptural groups in the Victoria and Albert Museum and the Tokyo National Gallery

(figs. 14, 15). The head of a large serpent emerges from the back of one of the partially draped secondary figures.

This version of the Garuda abduction motif also appears in a sculptural group in the Museum of Art and Archaeology, University of Missouri-Columbia (fig. 18).²⁸ The principal female figure is shown with the tail of a large snake behind her back, its head gripped in Garuda's beak. She is here flanked by two secondary seated figures, one of whom, a woman shown with her hand placed over her ear, is turned away from the scene; while the second, perhaps a youthful male, reaches for his wrap as



Fig. 19. Garuda's abduction of a woman accompanied by two male guards, Gandharan gray schist sculptural group. H. 33.3 cm. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Bernice Richard Gift 1980.325. Photo: Courtesy The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.



Fig. 20. Garuda's abduction of a woman accompanied by two male guards, Gandharan gray schist sculptural group, said to be from the Sanghao monastery, Pakistan. H. 20.59 cm. Private collection, Japan. After Kurita, *Gandhāran Art*, vol. 2, no. 513.

he looks up toward Garuda (see below, the third version of the motif).

A third version of the Garuda abduction motif is exemplified by several carefully executed sculptural groups that depict the principal woman flanked by two youthful male figures who brandish weapons as they turn to face the abductor. This version is exemplified by sculptural groups in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, and in a private collection in Japan (figs. 19, 20).²⁹ The principal woman in the Metropolitan Museum group, a voluptuous bejewelled figure in hip girdle, looks up at Garuda's head as she gathers her fallen drapery in her left hand (fig. 19). Her right hand falls on her breast in the gesture now familiar from

other versions of the motif noted above (cf. figs. 7, 14, 15). The tail of a hooded serpent held in Garuda's beak emerges through the bird's breast feathers and disappears behind the woman. The youth on the right bends over a coiled rope, as if preparing to lasso the great bird. The sketchier sculptural group in the Japanese collection shows the woman, in a long-sleeved garment, flanked by male youths armed with long swords (fig. 20). Apart from their leaf-shaped skirts, the youths in these sculptural groups are comparable to figures of soldiers, occasionally shown wearing only the loincloth, in Gandharan art.³⁰ The leaf-shaped loincloths of the youths in both sculptural groups identify them with similarly attired tritons and anguipeds in the early Ku-



Fig. 21. Anguiped with leaf-shaped loincloth, carved ivory from the Begram treasure, Afghanistan, 1st century A.D. Kabul Museum. After Mizuno et al., *Ancient Art of Afghanistan*, no. 47.

Fig. 22. Marine deities, Gandharan gray schist stair-riser relief, 2d century A.D. H. 16.6 cm. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Rogers Fund 1913, 13.96.21. Photo: Courtesy The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.



shan art of Mathura and Gandhara and, ultimately, with Graeco-Roman models (fig. 21).³¹ Early Gandharan parallels to the fully anthropomorphized youths in leaf-shaped loincloths are represented by images of marine deities such as those depicted on a stair-riser relief in the Metropolitan Museum of Art (fig. 22).³²

The addition of the two youthful male figures to the Garuda abduction scene is not without parallel on Graeco-Roman art. Indeed, the composition finds a formal model in an unconventional version of Ganymede's abduction by the eagle, depicted on a late Etruscan bronze mirror case from Palestrina, in the British



Fig. 23. Ganymede and the Eagle accompanied by two males and a female figure, relief decoration ■ a bronze mirror case from Palestrina. Late Etruscan, 3d century B.C. Diam. 15.2 cm. The British Museum, acc. no. 726. Photo: Courtesy the Trustees of the British Museum.

Museum (fig. 23). Here, two males and a female figure, believed to represent Ganymede's brothers and mother, are arranged around the figure of Ganymede as he is apprehended by the eagle. The eagle's wings frame the sides of the circular *emblema* on which the group is depicted in relief. The eagle's claws, covered by Ganymede's cloak, grasp the boy at the hips and lift him vertically off the ground. The other figures back away from the scene with gestures that suggest astonishment. The two male youths wear only necklaces, boots, and cloaks; the boy on the right raises a shepherd's crook in the right hand as he drops on one knee as if under the impact of the attack. The fleeing woman, partially draped

in a *himation*, wears a round necklace similar to those worn by the other figures and cross-bands of incised pendants that are worn only by Ganymede. The linkage between the figures of Ganymede and his male and female companions is here suggested by noteworthy correspondences in their dress and ornament.³³

A version of the Ganymede abduction scene, comparable to that on the emblem on the late Etruscan mirror case, evidently inspired the composition in the more complex versions of the Garuda abduction scene in Gandharan art. The nude, athletic youths who flank the central abduction scene on the mirror case offer close formal prototypes for the youthful male figures in Garuda abduction scenes. Even the shepherd's crook, the *pedum*, held by the youth on the right on the mirror case, may have provided the formula for the weapons carried by the young men in the Gandharan sculptural groups. It is such images of a feminized Ganymede, shown with the elaborate breast ornament worn only by the woman in the scene ■ the Etruscan mirror case, that doubtless inspired the transformation of the boy into a woman in Gandharan art and its offshoots.

In a *fourth* and most complex version of Garuda's abduction of a woman, pairs of male and female figures surround the protagonists, exemplified by a sculptural group in the Peshawar Museum, dated to the fifth century A.D., and a fragmentary group in the British Museum (figs. 24, 25).³⁴ Garuda, with the serpent's body coiled around his neck, envelops the five human figures in these scenes. One of the secondary female figures is shown on the floor beneath the female protagonist's feet, as another flees to the left. As in the third version of the motif, the youthful males flank the scene and, like protective guardians, brace for combat.

3. Conjectures on the Meaning of the Garuda Abduction Motif in Gandharan Art

The interpretations proposed for the motif of the eagle's seizure of a woman on the Hermitage plate are generally predicated upon the premise of a difference between two allegedly separate adaptations of the Graeco-Roman motif of Gany-



Fig. 24. Garuda's abduction of a woman accompanied by two male guards and two female figures, Gandharan sculptural group, 5th century A.D. H. 19.2 cm. Peshawar Museum, Pakistan, acc. no. 497. After Ingholt, *Gandharan Art in Pakistan*, no. 351.



Fig. 25. Garuda's abduction of a woman accompanied by two male guards and two female figures, Gandharan gray schist sculptural group, 5th century A.D. The British Museum, acc. no. 1888.8.62. Photo: Courtesy the Trustees of the British Museum.

medes' abduction by Zeus in the form of an eagle. These are a "Sasanian" type, found on the Hermitage plate and its offshoots, which show a willing prey, and a Gandharan type, found in Indian and Central Asian art, in which the prey is victimized by the eagle.

The distinction between the "Sasanian" and the Gandharan types of the eagle abduction motif is based on the prevailing interpretation of the Gandharan type as a scene of Garuda's victimization of a nagi, symbolizing the antagonism between bird and serpent that is understood as the opposition of the sun-force against the liquid energy of earthly waters.³⁵ A. K. Coomaraswamy interprets the scene in Gandharan art as something more than the mere opposition of Sun and Serpent, according to which serpents are represented as the natural prey of the solar eagle. Gandharan depictions of a Suparna

or Garuda carrying off a nagi, according to the latter, portray "the rape or rapture by the Sun-bird of a feminine serpent in human form," rather than "a simple opposition of the solar angelic and lunar-titanic powers of light and darkness." The presumption that it is really the serpentine and not the human form of the nagi that the eagle is rending, he notes, is supported by the fact that in these scenes the nagi herself, in her human aspect, seems to cling to rather than shrink from her raptor, who supports her in his grasp. By shedding her ophidian attribute, presumably the snake that emerges from her neck, the purified being emerges. Coomaraswamy further notes that both Ganymede's abduction by Zeus in the form of an eagle and the ecstatic feminine figure in Garuda's clutches "are symbols of the Psyche caught up by and assimilated to the Spirit."³⁶

The definitive interpretation of the Garuda abduction scene in Gandharan art as a generic reference to the Garuda-naga antagonism originates with the eminent Indologist Albert Grünwedel, whose description and reproduction of a drawing of a Gandharan relief from Sanghao, published by him in 1893, has served as the ultimate authority on the meaning of the motif. Grünwedel's text, quoted by Foucher and others, describes the Sanghao relief as "a rather coarsely executed figure, from the back of whose neck, on the best preserved relief, rises a long snake, is borne into the air by a great eagle. The features of this female figure . . . are distorted with pain: the eagle's beak tears at the serpent."³⁷

The Sanghao relief depicted in the drawing published by Grünwedel, and believed by him to be lost, is perhaps the best preserved of several similar reliefs from the same site (fig. 10).³⁸ In photographs of this relief (cf. fig. 9, left), which has since been acquired by the Delhi Museum, the female figure lacks the pained facial expression found in the drawing. Moreover, the raised right hand of the figure appears to hold the tail of a snake, the upper part of which is caught in Garuda's beak. The point of attachment of the serpent's tail to the neck of the female figure, as shown in the drawing, is unclear in the photographs. Grünwedel's interpretation of the Sanghao relief as a scene of Garuda's victimization of the nagi, though hardly justified by the Sanghao relief in Delhi, finds support in the apparently ophidian attribute of the woman in the miniature composition on a turban emblem from Sanghao, now in the Lahore Museum (fig. 11), and in the serpent-tailed nagini that are Garuda's victims in the later Buddhist art of the Indian subcontinent. In the turban emblem from Sanghao, the serpent's body emerges from the back of the woman, according to the formula used for the depiction of nagas in Gandharan art.³⁹

Grünwedel's interpretation of the Garuda abduction scene is repeated and embellished by Foucher, who explains Gandharan eagle abduction scenes as reference to Garuda's intention of devouring his victim.⁴⁰ "This is not merely a consumption," Coomaraswamy adds, "but also an assimilation and incorporation; if the act of solar violence is a rape, it is also a "rapture"

and a "transport" in both possible senses of both words."⁴¹ Foucher offers his thoughts on the differences between the Graeco-Roman models and the Gandharan adaptations of the eagle abduction motif. Not only is the eagle of Zeus disguised as the vehicle of Vishnu, with the addition of turban and earrings, remarks Foucher, but the victim's gracious pose, based on Indian taste and the opulence of Indian forms, belies the violence perpetrated against her. Once stereotyped in Gandharan art, Foucher argues, this motif remains unchanged, not because Garuda scorns eating males but due to his preference for young women, who are more tender. Foucher explains the presence of additional human figures around this central group in some versions of the scene in Gandharan art as a reference to Garuda's additional victims among the race of the nagas.⁴²

Foucher's observations of the eagle abduction motif in Gandharan art are forcefully asserted in Mavrodinov's study of the motif and its manifestation on the Nagyszentmiklós pitcher (fig. 5). While he acknowledges the Graeco-Roman ancestry of the eagle abduction motif in both the "Sasanian" and the Gandharan versions, Mavrodinov, following Foucher, describes the Gandharan eagle abduction scene as a reference to Garuda's victimization of a woman whom he intends to devour.⁴³ Still unchallenged, this interpretation of the Gandharan motif is cited in the most recent study of the scene on the Hermitage plate, which contrasts the Sasanian version, showing the woman feeding the eagle, with the Indian and Central Asian versions, which allegedly depict mistreatment of the woman by the eagle.⁴⁴

4. The Significance of the Motif in Buddhist Art

The Garuda/eagle and naga/serpent struggle, amply symbolized in the art of the Indian subcontinent and its offshoots, is clearly the underlying concept behind the eagle abduction motif in Gandharan art. When used as a Buddhist emblem, as on the turban of Bodhisattva images, the motif is surely a reference to the tenets of the Buddhist religion, such as renunciation of

desire and triumph over sensual pleasure.⁴⁵ However, this generic device is invested with specific meaning when narrative details and expressive nuances embellish and particularize the primary motif. The first and simplest Gandharan version of the Garuda abduction motif clearly bears the traditional talismanic and apotropaic significance of the Garuda and naga struggle in Indian art. This motif may be enriched by nuances of expression and details which lend it narrative specificity, evidenced in Gandhara art, as discussed below, or used strictly as a heraldic device, as in the subsequent Buddhist art of the Indian subcontinent and Central Asia (fig. 16).

In several Gandharan versions of Garuda's abduction of a woman, the generic, apotropaic symbol gains narrative interest through repetition of graphic references to a specific story-content with the following thematic elements. (1) Like the eagle of Zeus who carried off Ganymede, mindful of the significance of his prize and, therefore, "careful not to let his claws hurt the boy even through his clothes" (Pliny, *NH* 34.89), the woman in the Garuda abduction scenes is clutched gently in the great bird's talon (figs. 2 and 6). All versions represent Garuda's abduction of the woman in a vertical flight line, after late Roman models of the eagle's abduction or apprehension of Ganymede (cf. fig. 6).⁴⁶ (2) Garuda is frequently depicted with turban and earrings and occasionally portrayed with some human facial features. (3) The principal woman is distinguished from secondary female figures by her ornamental jewelry and attire, and by her attentive gestures or enraptured expression. (4) She is associated with ophidian attributes. Serpents are coiled around the bird's neck and gripped in its beak and are sometimes extended by the woman to the great bird. A serpent is attached to the neck of a secondary female figure in one version of the motif. (5) Secondary female figures, when included in the scene, express surprise, fear, or a sleeping state. One such figure is provided with an ophidian attribute. (6) The two youthful male attendants who flank the female figures function as protective guards and brandish weapons as they turn toward the abductor. Their leaf-shaped loin-cloths associate them with tritons, anguipedes, and marine deities in Gandharan art.

Repetition and embellishment of the cited details, in various combinations, in scenes of Garuda's abduction of a woman in Gandharan art suggest the artists' reliance on a specific story content. Like the composition on the late Etruscan mirror cover (fig. 23), where the figures are linked by means of their attributes, the figures in Garuda abduction scenes are interrelated by attributes that place them in an aquatic setting. The human figures share traits with tritons or anthropomorphized marine beings and with nagas or serpents. Garuda's abduction of the principal woman has all the appearances of a surprise attack in a palace setting where the principal woman is surrounded by female companions and youthful male guards. The story's focus is clearly the unexpected abduction of a married and guarded woman by Garuda. The scenario finds an extraordinary textual parallel in the story content of a Buddhist jataka, the *Sussundi-jataka*, no. 360, a fuller variant of the *Kakati-jataka* (no. 327, mentioned also in the *Kunala-jataka*, no. 536), illustrating the fickle nature of woman and preaching renunciation of sensual pleasure and cessation of passion. The moral of the story, that a woman cannot be prevented from having access to other men, is illustrated in these jatakas by recalling an old story told of the betrayal of a Bodhisattva who, in Garuda form, carries away a married woman to his remote palace on an island in mid-ocean. The *Sussundi-jataka*, the more detailed of the two versions, tells the story of a former life of the Buddha when he lived as a young Garuda on Naga Island, which the commentary explains as meaning Seruma Island (identified, in the *Kakati-jataka*, as a palace by Simbali Lake, on Mount Meru, around which the Garudas live). In the *Sussundi-jataka*, the Bodhisattva, in the form of an attractive youth, frequents the palace of the king of Benares in order to play dice with him. There, upon meeting the king's beautiful queen, Sussondi, a passion develops between the two that results in the Bodhisattva's abduction of the queen by supernatural means. He creates wind and darkness to confuse the queen's attendants and, in Garuda form, carries off Sussondi to his island palace.⁴⁷

Full details of this enchanting story are given in the complete text of the *Sussundi-jataka*, offered in the following translation from the

Pali that was kindly provided by Professor K. R. Norman.

5. *Sussondi-jataka*⁴⁸

"The fragrance of timiras is blown," etc. The Teacher, while living in Jetavana, told this story concerning a bhikkhu who was full of longing (for the world). The Teacher asked if it were true that he longed for the world and, when he was told that it was, asked what he had seen to make him full of longing. When he said that it was finely dressed womenfolk, the Teacher said, "Truly, bhikkhu, it is not possible to guard womenfolk. Sages of old, although putting them in the abode of Suppanas (= Sanskrit Suparna, often the equivalent of Garuda), and guarding them were unable to guard them." Being requested by him, the Teacher related a story of the past.

Once upon a time King Tamba reigned in Benares, and his chief queen, named Sussondi, was a woman of surpassing beauty. At that time the Bodhisattva was reborn as a young Supanna. At that time Naga Island was known as Seruma Island. The Bodhisattva lived on that island in the palace of the Supannas. He went to Benares in the guise of a young man and played dice with King Tamba. Seeing the perfection of his beauty they said to Sussondi, "A young man of such beauty plays dice with our king." She longed to see him, and one day, dressed in her finery, she came to the dice-chamber. (188) Standing among the attendants, she looked at the young man. He too looked at the queen, and the pair became mutually enamored. The Supanna king, by his supernatural powers, stirred up a wind in the city. The people, from fear of the house falling, went out of the palace. By his power he caused it to be dark, and, taking the queen through the air, he entered his own abode on Naga Island. No one knew of the coming or going of Sussondi. The Supanna took his pleasure with her, and went to play dice with the king. Now the king had a minstrel named Sagga, and, not knowing where the queen had gone, the king addressed the minstrel and urged him: "Go now and explore every path on land and sea, and see where the queen has gone."

He took provisions for his journey, and, beginning from the city gate, in his search he arrived at Bharukaccha. And at that time certain mer-

chants of Bharukaccha were going to the Golden Land by ship. He approached them and said, "I am a minstrel. If you remit my fare, I will make music for you. Take me with you." They agreed to do so, and, putting him on board, they set out. When the ship was going well, they called him and bade him make music for them. He said, "I would make music for you, but if I do so, the fish will leap about and your vessel will be broken. 'If a mere mortal,' they said, 'make music, there will be no leaping about of fish. Play to us.' "Then do not be angry with me." he said, and tuning his lute and moderating together the sound of the song and the sound of the lute strings, he made music for them. The fish were maddened at the sound and leaped about. Then a sea monster, leaping up, fell upon the ship and broke it. Lying on a plank and going as the wind took him, Sagga arrived at the Naga Island, near a banyan tree, where the Supanna king lived.

Now Queen Sussondi, whenever the Supanna king went to play dice, came down from her palace (189) and, as she was wandering on the edge of the shore, she saw and recognized the minstrel Sagga and asked him how he had arrived there. He told her the whole story. She comforted him and said, "Do not be afraid," and, embracing him in her arms, she carried him to her palace and laid him on a couch; when he was comforted, she gave him heavenly food, bathed him in heavenly perfumed water, dressed him in heavenly garments, and adorned him with flowers of heavenly perfume, and made him recline upon a heavenly couch. Thus she watched over him, and whenever the Supanna king returned, she hid him, and as soon as the king was gone, under the influence of passion she took her pleasure with him. At the end of a month and a half from that time some merchants who dwelt at Benares landed at the foot of the banyan tree in the island to get wood and water. The minstrel went on board ship with them. On reaching Benares, as soon as he saw the king, who was playing dice, Sagga took his lute and, making music, uttered the first stanza:

- {1} The fragrance of the timiras is blown; the evil sea is full of sound. Sussondi is far from here. Tamba, loves torment me.
On hearing this the Supanna uttered the second stanza:

- (2) How did you cross the sea? How did you see Seruma? How, Sagga, was there union of you and her? (190)
Then Sagga recited three stanzas:
- (3) The ship of merchants who had set out from Bharukaccha seeking wealth was broken by sea monsters, I floated on a plank.
- (4) That noble lady, always smelling of sandalwood, raised me in a soft gentle embrace, as a mother her own son.
- (5) That sultry-eyed one satisfied me with food, drink, clothes, and bed, and even herself. So know, Tamba.

While the minstrel was speaking, the Supanna became regretful and said: "Though I dwelt in the abode of the Supannas, I was unable to guard her. What do I want with this wicked woman?" He brought her back, gave her to the king, and departed. From then on he did not come again.

When the Teacher had finished his lesson, he revealed the truths and identified the birth-story. At that the end of the truths the bhikkhu, who was full of longing, was established in the fruit of stream-entry. "At that time Ananda was the king, and I myself was the Supanna king."

6. Correspondence Between Text and Artistic Motif

The correspondence between the text of the *Sussondi-jataka* and Garuda's abduction of a woman in many Gandharan sculptural groups is evidenced, in varying degrees, in both the simple and complex versions of the motif. The rapturous expression and languid pose of the abducted woman, in some examples from the first version (cf. figs. 14, 15), relate the latter to similar nuances of expression found in more complex versions of the motif where the principal woman is attended by male guards and secondary female figures (figs. 7, 18). The fearful expressions of the female attendants and the protective postures of the male guards would also seem to imply Garuda's abduction of a guarded woman under circumstances similar to those associated with the Bodhisattva's abduction of Sussondi in the *Sussondi-jataka*.

The text and sculptural imagery differ, however, in notable details. In the latter, the abducted woman is associated with attendants

that have serpent- or triton-like qualities. The abducted woman's attributes include serpents that are devoured by Garuda. The ophidian attributes of the abducted woman and her attendants place the abduction scene, not at Benares, which is the locus of the story in the jataka tale, but in a palace with a marine setting. The discrepancy between the setting of the Garuda abduction in the narrative of the jataka and that suggested by the Gandharan sculptural groups requires explanation. The jataka tales are traditionally placed at Benares in the accompanying commentaries, a fact that may explain a change in venue in the *Sussondi-jataka*. Moreover, the narrative content of the jataka was subject to regional and temporal variations, as indicated by the use of a different version of the *Sussondi-jataka* in the *Kakati-jataka*. Thus, in the version of the tale depicted in Gandharan art, Garuda's abduction of the queen occurs, not at Benares, as indicated in the commentary to the jataka, but seemingly at an island setting that may be identified with the "Naga Island" mentioned in the commentary. However, that Sussondi's home on this Naga Island was different from Garuda's own residence at "Seruma" (possibly an inversion of the order of consonants of "Sumeru," on Mount Meru, in mid-ocean) is perhaps suggested by the otherwise unnecessary explanation linking the two locations in the commentary.

It is noteworthy that the *Sussondi-jataka* and its variant are in fact cited in the search for an explanation of Garuda's abduction of a woman in the translation of Grünwedel's text by Burgess.⁴⁹ Grünwedel, however, evidently preferred the explanation of the motif as a generic reference to Garuda's triumph over a nagi, as personification of the serpent. The explanation of the relief as a scene of Garuda's victimization of a nagi, though hardly justified by particulars of the Sanghao relief in Delhi, is supported by one version of the motif in Gandharan art, a version that survives in the later art of the Indian subcontinent. Here the talismanic significance of the motif is suggested by the snake-flailing Garuda who tears into nagis and anthropomorphized serpents.⁵⁰ However, other Gandharan versions of the motif present more complex compositions that embellish the primary motif with additional details and nuances of expression that impart specific narrative

interest to the otherwise generic theme. In these versions, a narrative layer transforms the generic and apotropaic kernel of the motif into a composition with a story-content that refers specifically to the *Sussondi-jataka*.⁵¹

7. Conclusion

This formal analysis of the eagle's abduction of a woman on the Sasanian silver plate in the Hermitage Museum argues for the derivation of the motif from scenes of Garuda's abduction of a woman in the Graeco-Buddhist art of Gandhara, dated to the second–fifth centuries A.D. The more complex Gandharan versions, it is argued, embellish the motif's primary generic significance through the addition of a narrative layer that refers to a specific story, identified here with the *Sussondi-jataka*. The *Sussondi-jataka* treats the tale of the mutual attraction between a Bodhisattva and a married, and guarded, woman that results in the latter's abduction by the Bodhisattva in Garuda form. However, a difference in the specific, or regional, meaning of the motif in the Sasanian version is suggested by the attributes of the protagonists. The ophidian attributes of the woman in the Gandharan versions are replaced in the Sasanian composition by the heaped bowl raised as an offering to the great bird by the woman whose precise identity remains uncertain.

In subsequent manifestations of the motif in the West and in the art of the East Christian world, the Gandharan model underwent further modification and reinterpretation. The appearance of the eagle and serpent motif in the art of the Christian East, as explained by Wittkower, represents ■ adaptation of an early symbol to the exposition of the new faith and a reference to Christ's triumph over Satan.⁵²

The creative transformation in Gandharan art of the traditional Graeco-Roman motif of the boy Ganymede's abduction by the eagle of Zeus into Garuda's abduction of ■ beautiful woman thus offers an alternate model for the eagle abduction motif in the art of the Middle Ages. Geographical and cultural factors doubtless explain the adoption of the Gandharan model in Sasanian art, whereas both the Graeco-Roman and the Gandharan type occur farther west in the decoration of the gold pitchers from the

Nagyszentmiklós treasure, from Hungary (cf. fig. 5).⁵³ Although we may never know the particular Iranian folktale that perhaps is illustrated in the Sasanian adaptation of the motif, its very use in Iran, and its adaptation in Islamic art and in the Christian East, testify to the spread and universal appeal of an enchanting Buddhist tale and its graphic expression in the art of Gandhara.⁵⁴

Notes

This paper originated in the course of the preparation for a presentation in the *The Art of the Silk Roads* lecture series, which I offered for the Society for Asian Art, the Asian Art Museum, San Francisco, in 1994/1995. I am grateful to Betty Hutson and the Board of SAA, who initiated the lecture series, for the opportunity to refocus my research on the arts of the Silk Roads, the great transcontinental highway of the early Middle Ages, which remains a forbidding, and occasionally forbidden, area of study. I gratefully acknowledge the cooperation of John Stucky, librarian at the Asian Art Museum, who gave me access to that library's rich holdings of recent Chinese and Japanese publications. I am also grateful for comments and references provided by the following colleagues and graduate students: Professors Martin Schwartz and Wolfgang Heime and graduate students Yumiko Nakanishi and Sanijot Mehendale, at the Department of Near Eastern Studies, University of California, Berkeley; Rochelle Kessler, of the Department of South and Southeast Asia, The Metropolitan Museum of Art; Dr. Mary-Ann Lutzker, Mills College; and Dr. Martha L. Carter. I am especially indebted to Professor K. R. Norman, University of Cambridge, for his comments and for the new translation from the Pali of the *Sussondi-jataka* presented in this paper. I offer this study as a belated contribution to the *Bulletin of the Asia Institute's* volume in honor of Dr. A. David H. Bivar, whose research and teaching relate to the temporal and spatial scope of the present paper.

1. The motif of a woman's abduction by a great bird occurs in a rare example of Sasanian glyptics, exemplified by an impression (19.7 x 19.7 mm) ■ a bulla that bears another impression with a Pahlavi inscription ("ostandar Verozan"), in the Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris, acquired from a private collection in 1983 [see R. Gyselen, *Catalogue des sceaux, camées et bulles sassanides de la Bibliothèque Nationale et du Musée du Louvre*, vol. 1, Collection Générale [Paris, 1993], nos. 33.1, 14a.1, pp. 201, 206, 233]. On the Etana myth, see now P. Steinkeller,

"Early Semitic Literature and Third Millennium Seals with Mythological Motifs," in *Literature and Literary Language at Ebla*, Quaderni di Semitistica 18 (Florence, 1992), pp. 243–75. The motif was revived in the Iron Age, as evidenced in the image of the goddess transported by an eagle depicted on the gold bowl from Hasanlu, in northwestern Iran. See J. Duchesne-Guillemin, "Art et religion sous les sassanides," in *La Persia nel Medioevo*, Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei (Rome, 1971), p. 376; *idem*, "Art and Religion under the Sasanians," in *Mémorial Jean de Menasce* (Louvain, 1974), pp. 149–51; *idem*, "Les interprétations iranistes du vase de Hasanlu," in M. T. Barrelet et al., *Problèmes concernant les Hurrites*, vol. 2, Éditions Recherche sur les Civilisations, Mémoires, no. 49 (Paris, 1984), p. 189; I. Winter, "The 'Hasanlu Gold Bowl': Thirty Years Later," *Expedition* 31.2/3 (1989), pp. 93–95, fig. 6. On the Ganymede motif in Classical antiquity, see H. Sichtermann, *Ganymed. Mythos und Gestalt der antiken Kunst* (Berlin, 1953); "Ganymedes," in *Lexicon iconographicum mythologiae classicae*, vol. 4, pt. 1 (Munich, 1988). On the revival of the motif from the Middle Ages through more recent times, see R. Wittkower, "Roc: An Eastern Prodigy in a Dutch Engraving," in *Allegory and the Migration of Symbols* (Boulder, Colo., 1977), pp. 93–96; G. Kemper, *Ganymed: Studien zur Typologie. Ikonographie und Ikonologie*, Dissertationen zur Kunstgeschichte 12 (Cologne, 1980); *idem*, *Der Ganymed-Mythos in Emblematik und mythographischer Literatur des 16. Jahrhunderts* (Worms, 1985). On the temporal and spatial distribution of the motif in Asian art and folklore, see A. Alföldi, "Études sur le trésor de Nagyszentmiklós," *Cahiers archéologiques* 6 (1952), pp. 43–53.

2. The silver plate measures 22 cm in diameter, 2.9 cm in height, 0.08–0.21 cm in thickness, and 828.6 grams in weight, with a ring base. Its hammered and chased relief decoration is embellished with a mercury-gilded background. The plate was discovered in the vicinity of Cherdyn, the Perm region, in 1936, and has the inventory number S271 at the Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg. For discussions of the plate, see K. V. Trever, *Novye sasanidskie bluda (Nouveaux plats sassanides de l'Ermitage)* (Moscow, 1937), pp. 25–41; K. V. Trever and V. G. Lukonin, *Sasanidskoe serebro: Khudozhestvennaya kul'tura Irana III–VIII vekov*, *Sobranie Gosudarstvennogo Ermitazha* (Moscow, 1987), cat. no. 22, pp. 89–90, 113–14, 136, 137–38. A similar vegetal scroll border encircles the figure of a tigress and that of a pheasant on Hermitage plates acc. nos. S41 and S18, respectively, see Trever and Lukonin, *Sasanidskoe serebro*, nos. 23 and 24, pp. 89–90, 113–14, 136, 147–48. Chemical analysis of all three plates (S217, S41, S18) suggests their attribution to Trever and Lukonin's Groups 2 and 3, *ibid.*, pp. 129–36. Whereas Group 2

includes the largest number of vessels with images of kings comparable to Sasanian coin portraits, the imagery in Group 3 shows few strictly Sasanian features and is attributed to East Iranian workshops.

3. *Splendeur des Sassanides: L'empire perse entre Rome et Chine (224–642)*, Musées royaux d'Art et d'Histoire (Brussels, 1993), cat. nos. 67, 69 and 74, pp. 101, 224. Boris Marshak compares the style of rendition of the images and the filling of space in these two plates with the technique of embroidery, *ibid.*, p. 214. The date proposed for these plates by Marshak and Prudence Harper, A.D. late sixth century or the first half of the seventh, agrees with that proposed earlier by Trever and Lukonin, *Sasanidskoe serebro*, pp. 113–14. For the stucco images from Hāji-āhād, see M. Azarnoush, *The Sasanian Manor House at Hāji-āhād, Iran* (Florence, 1994), pp. 124–25, 129–30. The proportions of the female figure on the Hermitage plate S217 are unlike those of female figures in abduction scenes in Gandharan art and in the medieval art of the West, but correspond with the ideal type in Sasanian art and its antecedents in the ancient Near East, see N. Mavrodinov, *Le trésor protobulgare de Nagyszentmiklós*, *Archaeologia Hungarica* 29 (Budapest, 1943), p. 99; B. Goldman, "Women's Robes: The Achaemenid Era," *BAI* 5 (1991), pp. 95–96; G. Azarpay, "Designing the Body: Human Proportions in Achaemenid Art," *IA* 29 (1994), pp. 183–84.

4. Trever, *Novye sasanidskie bluda*, pp. 25–41. On the earliest references to the celebration of the Zoroastrian festival of Mithrakana, the chief holiday of the Zoroastrian calendar, celebrated on the day Mithra of the month Mithra, see M. Boyce and F. Grenet, *A History of Zoroastrianism*, vol. 3, *Zoroastrianism under Macedonian and Roman Rule* (Leiden, 1991), p. 260.

5. Mavrodinov, *Le trésor protobulgare*, p. 98. For an overview of the literature on this treasure, see A. Grabar, "Quelques observations sur le Trésor de Nagy Szent Miklos," *CRAI* (1968), pp. 251–61. For reproductions of the details of the gold pitchers, see G. László, *The Art of the Migration Period* (Coral Gables, Fla., 1940), figs. 150–51.

6. A. Alföldi, "Études sur le trésor de Nagyszentmiklós," pp. 44–49.

7. Alföldi refers to a ninth-century Buddhist painting, from Sangim, that shows the lassoing of a predatory bird that has carried off an infant, *ibid.*, p. 44. On the latter, see A. von Le Coq, *Bilderatlas zur Kunst und Kulturgeschichte Mittel-Asiens* (Berlin, 1925), pp. 25–26, fig. 151.

8. Duchesne-Guillemin, "Art et religion sous les sassanides," in *La Persia nel Medioevo*, p. 379.

9. Trever and Lukonin, *Sasanidskoe serebro*, pp. 89–90, 136–37. For a reinterpretation of Aban Yashī XVI, now see P. Thieme, "Wurzel Yat in Veda und Avesta (Nebst einem Exkurs über eine altiranische

[altindische?] Analogie zum zweiten Abenteuer Sinbads, des Seefahrers), in *Monumentum H. S. Nyberg*, vol. 3, Act 6 (Leiden, 1975), pp. 348–54.

10. Duchesne-Guillemin, "Art and Religion under the Sasanians," in *Mémorial Jean de Menasce*, pp. 149–51.

11. A. D. H. Bivar, "An Unknown Punjab Seal-Collector," *JNSI* [1961], pp. 316–17, pl. VII-7. Bivar identifies the motif on the face of the ring-bezel with the abduction of the nymph Aegina by Zeus in the form of an eagle, known from Hellenistic glyptics. While the poor quality of the illustration in Bivar's article does not permit close study of the composition of the seal, Bivar's description of it fits closely the format and details of the eagle abduction motif in Gandharan art. Especially significant is "the rope-like object which passes up from the girl's shoulders, behind the eagle's neck, and a portion of which is apparently held in the bird's beak. It terminates in a thickened protuberance near the edge of the impression . . ." which clearly compares with the serpent which the woman raises toward Garuda in Gandharan sculptural groups (see below).

12. *Splendeur de Sassanides*, p. 224. In Persian mythology, the great Saen bird, the later *Senmurv/Simurgh*, lives in the branches of this tree, and when it flutters its wings, the branches of the tree are broken, scattering its seeds which regenerate on earth, see J. Hinnells, *Persian Mythology* (New York, 1985), p. 22.

13. K. M. Phillips, "Subject and Technique in Hellenistic-Roman Mosaics: A Ganymede Mosaic from Sicily," *The Art Bulletin* [1960], pp. 256–57. On the original Greek pictorial model of the theme, see pp. 260–62.

14. The Gandharan sculptural groups that depict the Garuda abduction scene, cited here, represent only those that have come to my attention through perusal of sources available to me. This corpus is by no means comprehensive and may be substantially enriched by the addition of other examples of the motif that doubtless exist in museums and private collections. For the motif in Gandharan and Gupta sealstones, see Bivar, "An Unknown Punjab Seal-Collector," pp. 316–19, pl. VII-7, which offers a formal model in intaglio for the Gupta version discussed by A. K. Coomaraswamy, "The Rape of a Nāgi: An Indian Gupta Seal," *Bulletin of the Museum of Fine Arts* [Boston] 35 [1937], nos. 209–10, pp. 38–41, 56–57. For the occurrence of the motif of Garuda's abduction of a woman, in the mural from Zar-tepe, in Kushan Bactria, see M. A. Reytova, "Zhivopis' Zar-tepa" (The painting of Zar-tepe), *IMKU*, no. 20 (1986), pp. 193–97; S. R. Pidaev, "Une image de Garuda dans l'art de la Bactriane Kushane," in "Histoire et cultes de l'Asie centrale préislamique: Sources écrites et documents

archéologiques" (UNESCO colloquium, Paris, 22–28 November 1988), abstracts, pp. 84–86.

The Gandharan eagle abduction motif is identified by Albert von Le Coq with a Garuda abduction scene in a Serindian cave painting, from a Kizil grotto at Kucha. The Kizil painting was discovered by Le Coq in the triangular corner of the false lantern roof, in the Cofferred Cave (Grünwedel's "Kassetten-Höhle," now numbered as Kizil Cave no. 165), datable to the first half of the seventh century, see *Bilderatlas zur Kunst und Kulturgeschichte Mittel-Asiens*, p. 25, fig. 150. Le Coq's unclear illustration of this image, photographed *in situ*, has since been published in color in *The grotto art of China: The Kizil grottoes (Kijirū Sekkutsu)*, compiled and edited by the Supervisory Committee for Cultural Relics of Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region and the Kizil Grottoes Depository for Cultural Relics (Tokyo, 1984), [in Japanese], vol. 2, p. 280, pl. 177. I wish to thank Yumiko Nakanishi for providing me with a translation of the appropriate passages in this text. This scene, like Garuda's abduction of an ape, found in another painting from Kizil, evidently differs in meaning from Garuda's abduction of a woman in Gandharan art. For the ape abduction scene, see A. Grünwedel, *Alt buddhistische Kultstätten in Chinesisch-Turkestan* (Berlin, 1912), fig. 240; *The grotto art of China*, vol. 2, *op. cit.*

15. A. Foucher, *L'art gréco-bouddhique du Gandhāra: Étude sur les origines de l'influence classique dans l'art bouddhique de l'Inde et de l'Extrême-Orient* (Paris, 1918), vol. 2, fig. 318, illustrates a photograph of this sculptural group from Sanghao, with the woman's head shown in three-quarter view, reproduced from H. H. Cole, *Memorandum on Ancient Monuments in Eusofzai, With a Description of the Excavations undertaken from the 4th February to the 16th April 1883, and Suggestions for the Disposal of Sculptures* (n.p., 1883), pl. 21. Cole here notes that the theme on the Sanghao relief occurs in another, fragmentary, relief and on a small knob (probably a turban emblem), from the same area at Sanghao, and on a fragment from the upper monastery at Nathou. A photograph of the Sanghao relief is also reproduced in I. Kurita, *Gandhāran Art*, vol. 2, *The World of the Buddha* (Tokyo, 1990), fig. 514 (without indication of its dimensions). Cole's drawing is reproduced in A. Grünwedel's *Buddhistische Kunst in Indien: Handbücher der königlichen Museen zu Berlin mit Abbildungen* (Berlin, 1893), fig. 34; *idem*, *Buddhist Art in India*, trans. A. C. Gibson, rev. and enlarged by J. Burgess (London, 1901), fig. 61.

16. For the Nathou group, see Foucher, *L'art gréco-bouddhique du Gandhāra*, vol. 2, fig. 319; J. Burgess, *The Ancient Monuments, Temples and Sculptures of India*, vol. 1 (London, 1897), pl. 113; Kurita, *Gandhāran Art*, vol. 2, fig. 514.

17. For the example in the Lahore Museum (no. 1045), see H. Ingholt, *Gandhāran Art in Pakistan* (New York, 1957), no. 350, p. 149. The chronology of Gandhāran sculpture followed here is based on Ingholt's classification of Groups I-IV, dated to the second-fifth centuries A.D., *ibid.*, pp. 25-41, with reference to H. C. Ackermann's comparative chronology based on Roman art, in *Narrative Stone Reliefs from Gandhāra in the Victoria and Albert Museum in London* (Rome, 1975).

18. See a gray schist turban emblem (H. 7 cm), in a private collection, in Japan, Kurita, *Gandhāran Art*, vol. 2, fig. 186; a gray schist turban emblem from Takht-i-Bahai, in the Peshawar Museum (no. 1099), F. Tissot, *Gandhāra* (Paris, 1985), pl. XXIX-6; emblem in a private collection in London, Kurita, *Gandhāran Art*, vol. 2, no. 170. For the use of the Buddha image as a turban emblem, *idem*, *Gandhāran Art*, vol. 2, figs. 169-74.

19. The Bodhisattva image, with an overall height of 120 cm, in the Musée Guimet, acc. no. AO 2907, is discussed by M. Hallade and H. Hinz, *Gandhāran Art of North India and the Graeco-Buddhist Tradition of India, Persia, and Central Asia* (New York, 1968), p. 93, pl. 86; and fully illustrated in Kurita, *Gandhāran Art*, vol. 2, no. 7.

20. Hallade describes the coiffure as having two or three folds fixed in front with a cabochon dominated by a cockade of material held in place by the emblem, see Hallade and Hinz, *Gandhāran Art of North India*, pp. 93-94. For a drawing, see Tissot, *Gandhāra*, pl. XXXI-1.

21. Thus by comparison, the juxtaposition of tritons and the emblem showing Garuda's abduction of the nagi is perhaps to be seen as reference to the future Buddha's triumph over the nagi, as a symbol of desire. For Gandhāran images of nagas' submission to the Buddha, see Ackermann, *Narrative Stone Reliefs*, pls. XXXVIII-b, XLVI, XLVII-a, LXX.

22. See above, n. 14.

23. O. Kurz, "Begram et l'occident Gréco-Romain," in J. Hackin, *Nouvelles recherches archéologiques à Begram*, MDAFA, vol. 11 (Paris, 1954), no. 60, pp. 103-4, fig. 265.

24. Phillips, "Subject and Technique in Hellenistic-Roman Mosaics," pp. 258-59, figs. 16-19. On the earliest Greek pictorial versions of the motif, and the controversy about the date of the Greek original of the Vatican sculptural group depicting Ganymede and the Eagle, *ibid.*, p. 260.

25. Kabul Museum no. 57.156, Diam. 12.8 cm, *ibid.*, no. 96, fig. 296, pp. 123-26. Kurz compares this motif to a mural from the Stabiae showing Ganymede with Eros astride the eagle. A second plaster medallion from Begram (*ibid.*, no. 128, fig. 293, p. 122), showing a bearded man before an altar who is feeding

a small eagle perched on a tree, is here thought to represent a person other than Ganymede. This is one of several plaster emblemata from Begram, dated to the first century or earlier, that reproduce themes of late Hellenistic metalwork. The delicacy of the modelling of the soft, sensuous forms in these plaster medallions, believed to have been facsimiles of Greek silverware, is contrasted by Rowland with dry and mechanical Roman versions of the same themes, see B. Rowland, in S. Mizuno et al., *Ancient Art of Afghanistan* (Tokyo, 1964), pp. 211-12; B. Rowland, *Art in Afghanistan: Objects from the Kabul Museum* (Coral Gables, Fla., 1971), no. 99.

26. Cf. the gray schist head of a Bodhisattva in the Lahore Museum (H. 38 cm, W. 22 cm; old no. 2375, new no. G-172), published in *The Exhibition of Gandhāran Art of Pakistan*, Seibu Museum of Art, catalog no. 1-4 (Tokyo, 1984) also in F. Tissot, *The Art of Gandhāra: Buddhist Monks' Art, on the North-West frontier of Pakistan* (Paris, 1986), fig. 181, and Kurita, *Gandhāran Art*, vol. 2, no. 172.

27. The illustration of this gray schist group (H. 14.5 cm) is evidently reversed in one of the two sources that publish it, cf. Kurita, *Gandhāran Art*, vol. 2, no. 190, and *The Yamato Bunkakan Museum Catalogue* (Nara, 1985), no. 10. The latter places the piece in a private collection in Japan, whereas Kurita places it in a European collection.

28. The schist group in the Museum of Art and Archaeology, University of Missouri-Columbia, (H. 20.7 cm) is published in S. D. Nagar, *Gandhāran Sculpture: A Catalogue of the Collection in the Museum of Art and Archaeology, University of Missouri-Columbia* (Missouri, 1981), pp. 40-41. I wish to thank Dr. Mary-Ann Lutzker for bringing this example to my attention.

29. For the Metropolitan Museum group (H. 33.3 cm), see S. J. Czuma, *Kushan Sculpture: Images from Early India* (Cleveland: The Cleveland Museum of Art, 1985), no. 95. I wish to thank Rochelle Kessler, of the Department of Asian Art, The Metropolitan Museum of Art for the photograph of the Metropolitan Museum group. For the group in the private collection in Japan, said to be from Sanghao (H. 20.50 cm), see Kurita, *Gandhāran Art*, vol. 2, no. 513.

30. Cf. soldiers from the host of Mara, in B. Rowland, *Gandhāra Sculpture from Pakistan Museums* (New York, 1960), p. 30; Ackermann, *Narrative Stone Reliefs*, pl. XL.

31. For the leaf-shaped loincloth in the art of the Indian subcontinent, see P. Stern, "Les ivoires et os découverts à Begram," in Hackin, *Nouvelles recherches archéologiques à Begram*, pp. 30-32, figs. 521-25; Ingholt, *Gandhāran Art in Pakistan*, no. 395; H.-P. Francfort, *Les palettes du Gandhāra*, MDAFA, vol. 23

[Paris, 1979], pl. XXV-49. For Graeco-Roman prototypes, cf. the triton from the Great Frieze of the Pergamon Altar, from the mid-second century B.C., *The Masterpieces of the Pergamon and Bode Museum*, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Preussischer Kulturbesitz (Mainz, 1993), p. 73, fig. 1-a. For parallel images in the minor arts, cf. a bronze plaque, E. Babelon and J. A. Blanchet, *Catalogue des bronzes antiques de la Bibliothèque Nationale* (Paris, 1895), no. 68; floor mosaic from Gerasa, C. Kondoleon, *Domestic and Divine: Roman Mosaics in the House of Dionysos* (Ithaca, 1995), fig. 137.

32. The relief is assigned to Ingholt's Group I, dated to the second century A.D., Ingholt, *Gandhāran Art in Pakistan*, pp. 26-27.

33. Photo courtesy the Trustees of the British Museum. Diam. 15.2 cm. For a discussion of this object, see H. B. Walters, *Catalogue of the Bronzes, Greek, Roman, and Etruscan in the Department of Greek and Roman Antiquities, British Museum* (London, 1899), no. 726, p. 125, dated here to the third century B.C.

34. For the group in the Peshawar Museum, acc. no. 497, H. 19.2 cm, see Ingholt, *Gandhāran Art in Pakistan*, no. 351 (Ingholt assigns it to Group IV, dated to the fifth century A.D.). For the fragmentary group in the British Museum, see Foucher, *L'art gréco-bouddhique du Gandhāra*, vol. 2, p. 37, fig. 321.

35. For a functional analysis of the eagle and serpent struggle in different historical settings, see R. Wittkower, "Eagle and Serpent," in *Allegory and the Migration of Symbols* (Boulder, Colo., 1977), pp. 16-44. Despite regional variations in the specific meaning of the eagle and serpent struggle, Wittkower sees the basic idea as the fundamental opposition of light and darkness, good and evil, *ibid.*, p. 26. On the bird and serpent struggle in Indian mythology, see also H. Zimmer, *Myths and Symbols in Indian Art and Civilization* (Princeton, repr. 1992), pp. 72-76.

36. Coomaraswamy, "The Rape of a Nāgi," nos. 209-10, pp. 38-39; *idem*, in Zimmer, *Myths and Symbols in Indian Art and Civilization*, see note, p. 76; *idem*, "Angel and Titan: An Essay in Vedic Ontology," *JAOS* 55 (1935), p. 419. Cf. M.-Th. Picard-Schmitter's comment, in reference to the Ascension motif, of the type found on the eleventh-century Saljuq textiles from the Naqqarkhana of Ray, that the eagle's claws were for use against terrestrial, and hence demoniac, forces that hinder the spirit's escape from the body, see "Scènes d'apothéose sur des soieries provenant de Ray," *ArtAs* 14 (1951), p. 341.

37. Grünwedel, *Buddhist Art in India*, pp. 109-10, fig. 61 (see n. 15, above). Grünwedel's explanation is accepted by V. A. Smith, *A History of Fine Art in India and Ceylon* (Oxford, 1911), p. 119, and by Foucher, *L'art gréco-bouddhique du Gandhāra*,

vol. 2, p. 37, and subsequently repeated in sources that treat the Gandhāran examples. Grünwedel's explanation is also quoted by E. Herzfeld, "Der Thron von Khosro," *Jahrbuch der Preussischen Kunstsammlungen* 57.4 (1936), p. 135, and accepted by Trever, *Novye sasanidskie bliuda*, pp. 29-30, and others (see below, nn. 43-44). Exceptionally, Alföldi relates the eagle abduction motif on the Hermitage plate and its offshoots to Gandhāran models, yet he too adopts Grünwedel's interpretation of the Sanghao relief as Garuda's victimization of a nāgi, see "Études sur le trésor de Nagyszentmiklós," pp. 44-45.

38. Grünwedel, *Buddhist Art in India*, fig. 61, p. 109, n. 2. The drawing is after Cole, *Memorandum on Ancient Monuments in Eusofzai*, pl. 21.

39. Ackermann, *Narrative Stone Reliefs*, pls. VI-b, XX-b.

40. Foucher, *L'art gréco-bouddhique du Gandhāra*, vol. 2, pp. 37-38.

41. Coomaraswamy, "The Rape of a Nāgi," p. 41.

42. Foucher, *L'art gréco-bouddhique du Gandhāra*, vol. 2, pp. 38-39.

43. Mavrodinov, *Le trésor protobulgare*, p. 95.

44. B. Marshak, in *Splendeur des Sassanides*, cat. no. 74, p. 224.

45. See above, n. 18.

46. For a discussion of the lost group of Ganymede with the eagle of Zeus of Leochares, the Greek sculptor of the fourth century B.C., and Roman copies of the group, such as a statuette in the Vatican (Galleria dei Candelabri, no. 118), see M. Bieber, *The Sculpture of the Hellenistic Age*, rev. ed. (New York, 1981), pp. 62-63, fig. 198. For the ultimate Greek prototype of the eagle abduction scene, see Phillips, "Subject and Technique in Hellenistic-Roman Mosaics," pp. 260-62.

47. The commentary to both the *Sussondi-* and *Kakati-jatakas* begins by quoting the catchword, "the fragrance of the timira flowers," the first words of the verse (*gāthā*) in each of the two jatakas. The moral of the story in the *Sussondi-* and *Kakati-jatakas* addresses the passionate longing for women that distracts a disciple during the course of his meditation on the thought of the Buddha. The lesson of the story is stated to be a revelation that serves to direct the wayward disciple along the true path toward enlightenment. The disloyalty, ingratitude, and immorality of women is the subject of a number of other jatakas, cf. *Kunala* (no. 536) and *Samugga* (no. 436). The latter, a tale of the demon who failed to keep his wife virtuous, even after he swallowed her, and carried her about in his belly, illustrates the ludicrous length to which husbands resort to limit access to their wives. The low opinion of women implied in these stories, reflects not only the prevailing notions of the time but also the Buddhist's ascetic

doctrine that preached renunciation of sensual pleasure. Here, as in other birth-stories, the jatakas illustrate Buddhist doctrines and precepts by appropriate example through the use of popular fables and folklore. The stories begin with a particular circumstance in the life of the Buddha which lead him to relate a birth-story and thus to reveal an event in one of his previous existences as a Bodhisattva, a being destined to attain Buddhahood. Each story is illustrated by the moral related in verse (*gāthā*), uttered by the future Buddha, in a more archaic language than that of the commentary. The prose commentary is evidently a redaction of earlier material, translated into Pali in the fifth century. See E. B. Cowell, *The Jātaka or Stories of the Buddha's Former Births: Translated from the Pali by Various Hands*, vols. 1–4 (1895; repr. London, 1973). For an extended parable on the wiles of women, see *ibid.*, p. V, *Kunala-jataka*, no. 536, and with reference to the *Kakati-jataka*.

48. K. R. Norman comments that the story does not entirely fit with the verses: verse 1 mentions timira flowers, which do not appear in the story. The commentary explains that these were all around the banyan tree (where the Supanna lived). Verse 2 asks Sagga how he reached Seruma. The story has to have an explanation that Naga Island was called Seruma Island at that time, and the commentary explains that Seruma means Seruma Island. Verse 3 states that the boat was broken by sea monsters. The story states that it was one sea monster. There is a problem with the root *rakkh-*, which means both "guard," i.e., "watch over," and "guard against." In the first paragraph, Cowell twice translates it as "being on one's guard against," but at the end of the story as "failed to guard her safety." It is possible that this is correct, but I have translated the word in both places as "guard," although there is some tautology in the phrase "guarding them (carefully) were unable to guard them (completely)." I have translated in this way because in other stories there are references to the lengths to which husbands go to prevent their wives from having access to other men, or other men having access to their wives. I presume that the bhikku was able to see finely dressed womenfolk because their husbands had not guarded them carefully enough. (I wish to thank Professor Norman for kindly providing me with this new translation of this text and for his considered comments.)

49. Grünwedel's *Buddhistische Kunst in Indien*, pp. 97–98. *Idem*, *Buddhist Art in India*, p. 109, n. 3. In his interpretation of the relief from Sanghao as a depiction of Garuda's carrying off of a nagi, Grünwedel notes the existence of Buddhist legends of such

acts, without making mention of any specific jatakas. In the translation of Grünwedel's book, Burgess adds a reference to the jatakas, among which, he notes, there are "two or three that speak of the Garuda king carrying off a beautiful queen from her husband," and cites jatakas nos. 327, 360, and 536. Therefore, it is unclear whether Grünwedel himself had these same jatakas in mind.

50. Grünwedel, *Buddhist Art in India*, pp. 48–52; *idem*, *Altbuddhistische Kunststätten in Chinesisch-Turkistan* (Berlin 1912), *passim*.

51. As in other instances in the history of art, when used in isolation, the symbol relates directly to the viewer in an apotropaic sense. However, when enriched with narrative detail, the symbol acquires specificity within that context. The same symbol may also be used as a purely ornamental device, as evidenced in the Garuda abduction scene on the Gupta sealing in the Boston Museum of Fine Arts [fig. 16], cf. Wittkower, "Eagle and Serpent," p. 28.

52. Moreover, the direct Indian model (represented by Garuda's struggle with the serpent) for the tale of the struggle between the serpent and the fabulous bird of the Orient, as related in the Beatus manuscripts of the tenth to twelfth centuries, is all the more plausible in light of the identification of the Gandharan motif with the *Sussondi-jataka*. The abduction of Sussondi by the Bodhisattva in Garuda form, related in the jataka, was undertaken during a windstorm and under cover of darkness, miraculously brought about by the Bodhisattva. Similarly Christ, as related in the Beatus manuscripts, like the bird of the East who concealed himself with dust in his struggle with the serpent, envelopes himself with the dirt of flesh in order to deceive the godless deceiver with pious fraud. See Wittkower, "Eagle and Serpent," pp. 31, 37.

53. Mavrodinov, *Le trésor protobulgare*, see nos. 2 and 7. Whereas the Gandharan model is recalled on the gold ewer no. 2, which shows a woman bearing branches in her raised arms as she is carried away by the eagle, the second ewer, no. 7, shows two examples of a male figure who, like Ganymede, the cupbearer of Zeus, raises a cup to the eagle's beak.

54. For Islamic adaptations of the motif, see Picard-Schmitter, "Scènes d'apothéose sur des soieries provenant de Raiy," pp. 306–41; D. Thompson, "Abrišam, silk," *Elr*, vol. 1, pp. 243–44. For the ascension motif in the art of the European Middle Ages, see V. M. Schmidt, *A Legend and Its Image: The Aerial Flight of Alexander the Great in Medieval Art* (Groningen, 1995).